

PIONEER SQUARE REVITALIZATION BUSINESS PLANNING PROJECT

Top Priority Recommendations: Executive Summary of Technical Assistance Visit Donovan Rypkema, *PlaceEconomics*, December 20, 2009

1. Establish an entity that is a comprehensive economic development organization. This could be a new organization, a reconstituted Pioneer Square Community Association, or a subset of another organization.
2. Systematically assemble and evaluate reliable economic data for the Pioneer Square for the last 5 to 8 years.
3. Create and then implement a communications strategy targeting both Pioneer Square stakeholders and the larger Seattle community regarding the organization and its role and the economic facts (as opposed to anecdotes) of the Pioneer Square economy.
4. Actively recruit and involve the growth sector business segments in Pioneer Square beyond retailing and food and beverage.
5. Incorporate these and other priorities into a comprehensive strategy for Pioneer Square.

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Goals and Strategies: Community Actions

Goal #1: Increase Residential Density in Pioneer Square

- Encourage and advocate for greater residential development – Identify specific incentives needed to create more residential space in the neighborhood

Goal #2: Collect Data on Economic Activity, Reach Out to Businesses Identified

- Research and inventory the businesses and nonprofit organizations located above the ground floors; understand “who is in Pioneer Square” and accurately characterize the economy
- Inventory existing businesses, and identify missing complementary uses (cluster strategy)
- Meet with businesses individually and in groups to engage them, solicit their needs for business retention and expansion (BRE)
- Reach out to large companies and institutions outside Pioneer Square, to obtain their support and engagement

Goal #3: Address Vacant, Dilapidated, and Underused Buildings

- Identify, inventory, and map neglected buildings
- Develop targeted strategies for each dilapidated, neglected building in the Square
- Engage property owners directly in efforts to improve the appearance, tenancy, and upkeep of the District

Goal #4: Public Safety and Civility

- Develop standards for social service agency responsibilities regarding clients outside their buildings and in the neighborhood
- Support a community center for Pioneer Square; a place for people to go during the day

Goal #5: Marketing, Branding and Promotion

- Communicate the Square’s architecture as “one of the great historic districts in America;” create materials and visuals to illustrate the point (quality, scale, and value of historic buildings)
- Communicate Seattle’s cultural and historical heritage, through plaques, specialty walks, interpretation
- Build on the First Thursday Art Walk to attract more and new people to the Square
- Support the National Parks Services’ Trails to Treasure program
- Support efforts to expand the Square’s digital media and gaming cluster

Goal #6: Organizational Development and Advocacy

- Establish organizational capacity, with adequate staff and funding, to execute this business-oriented economic development agenda.
- Address the mix of boundaries and overlaid zones – MID, BIA, PS Historic District, planning area, etc – identify and communicate the District’s boundaries

Goals and Strategies: City Actions

Goal #1: Historic Preservation and Development Environment

Development and Adaptive Reuse Incentives

- Enact South Downtown zoning incentives that are adequate to help increase residential density
- Convene the development community to better understand potential incentives and barriers to residential development
- Use the City’s tools and invest in incentives to help increase residential development

Building and Energy Code Provisions

- Develop performance-based energy code provisions for historic buildings, based on national models
- Investigate the NJ rehabilitation building code – for adaptive reuse
- Evaluate St. Louis model or matching Federal tax breaks with State tax incentives
- Recommendations from Sally Clark’s Task Force on historic preservation incentives...

Goal #2: Infrastructure, Parking and Transportation

Parking

- Review the quantity and location of on-street parking spaces. Identify opportunities to free up spaces for shopping and visitor use
- Manage Sunday parking to free up short-term spaces for shoppers and visitors

Transportation

- Promote the District's accessibility by transit
- Support funding to extend the streetcar line to Pioneer Square
- Support mitigation of major construction projects in the Square

Technology

- Take the lead in identifying and executing an investment strategy that delivers reliable broadband to the Pioneer Square and Belltown neighborhoods

Goal #3: Public Safety and Civility

Public Safety Experience and Perceptions

- Identify city actions and strategies to increase the perceptions of public safety in the District (more/reword)
- Effectively enforce existing City regulations – “enforcement of existing regulations lags actual regulatory levels” -
- Enact measures to improve public civility

Human Services Programs and Strategies

- Reach out to the District's human service agencies and organize efforts to discuss current needs and issues, and develop a plan of action
- Identify and understand the population on the street....(more)
- Develop standards for social service agency responsibilities regarding clients outside their buildings and in the neighborhood

Goal #4: Economic Development Support and Investment

- Align the City's business and economic development activities to support Pioneer Square's business climate and activity; provide staff and financial support for the initiatives in this Plan
- Support economic activity data collection efforts
- Support identification of new and emerging clusters
- Help recruit complementary new businesses